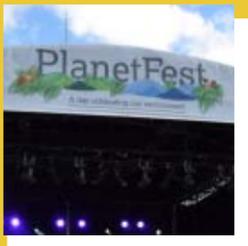


SADC Transfrontier Conservation Areas at the *IUCN World Parks Congress*

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Inside



Celebrating PlanetFest with children at IUCN Parks Congress

2



World Leaders Discuss Food Insecurity

3



Delightfully Green, Blue Mountains

5

Finding a Place for Communities in Tourism and Conservation

Lessons from the Maasai and Namibia's Khwe

By Mabvuto Banda

From out of Kenya comes the good news about how the Maasai, government, NGOs and private sector are working together to conserve wildlife.

The Maasai, whose rights were not recognised for many years, are now taking a lead in wildlife conservation on a continent endowed with a diversity of natural resources.

Unlike Botswana's San people who face a ban against hunting in the Central Kalahari National Park, the Maasai are benefiting from wildlife.

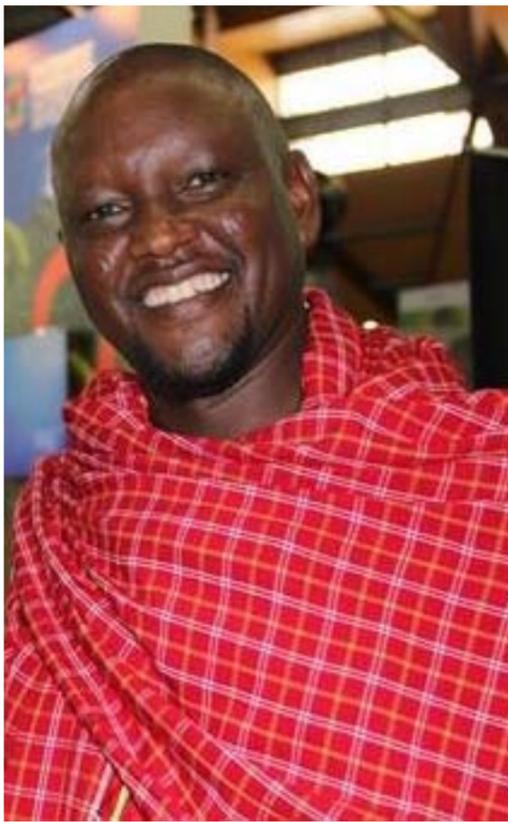
The success of the Mara Naboisho Conservancy, after years of exploitation, is an example of what happens when the rights of the indigenous people are recognised and their way of life appreciated.

Found in Kenya, adjacent to the famous Maasai Mara Reserve, the Mara Naboisho Conservancy was set up by the Maasai, pioneering a new approach which ensures that ecotourism provides them with an income.

Naboisho, which in Maasai means, 'lets come together' was set up in 2010 at the suggestion of local Maasai chiefs, as a joint project with Basecamp Foundation, a Norwegian non-profit organisation that was started in 1996.

Daniel Ole Sambu, coordinator of another successful initiative involving the Masaai called Predator Compensation Fund (PCF), says the Nabiosho scheme has been a success because the Maasai themselves are earning an income from protecting wildlife and are being recognised as a people.

"What we do at PCF is to engage the Maasai



Daniel Ole Sambu (Left) and Namibian Minister for Tourism and Environment, Ushesua Herunga (Right) talked about the successes of working with communities.
Credit: IPS

communities so as to achieve the same results like the Naibosho Conservancy and that is to make them earn an income while protecting wildlife and its biodiversity," says Sambu.

The PCF, says Sambu, was the first project to be implemented in the Maasai Land Preservation Trust and its success has been phenomenal because it has slowed the retribution killings of lions by the Maasai to protect their livestock.

"The PCF works around a dynamic system of penalties and incentives and compensates the local community for livestock lost to predators not just in return for stopping the killing of lions and other predators but on an agreement that penalises other community members when it is violated," explains Sambu.

Between 2003 and 2008, Sambu says, the PCF recorded unprecedented success as lion

killing by poison or spears virtually stopped on Mbirikani Group Ranch (MGR) within a Maasai community of 10,000 people.

Namibia is another country showcasing its success in working with locals to conserve wildlife.

Two leaders from the Khwe, an indigenous tribe found in Namibia's Bwab-wata National Park bordering three countries; Botswana, Zambia and Angola, explain how they are successfully working with government and other stakeholders to protect and manage wildlife.

Alfred Chadeu and Thadeus Chadeu, believe their indigenous knowledge is helping to manage the protected areas and ensuring that both people and the environment benefit.

Continued on page 2

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Finding a Place for Communities in Tourism and Conservation

Continued from front page

“We know that our knowledge has helped to reduce poaching and caused the wildlife population to increase in our territory which currently has over 6,000 elephants, outnumbering our population of 5,500,” says Alfred at the IUCN congress.

“If game meat is sold in the reserve, we have agreed that we share the revenue with government on a 50:50 basis,” Alfred says, adding that such initiatives have made communities happy and discouraged poaching.

The country’s Minister for Tourism and Environment agrees: “Involving the communities over the years has helped Namibia to increase the number of lions from 20 to 130, elephants from 7,500 to 20,000,” says Ushekua Herunga, the Minister.

As Namibia and Kenya make headway in the integration of their indigenous communities in wildlife conservation, Botswana is still trying to find ways of working with the San

people whose livelihood is so dependant on Central Kalahari National Park.

The San’s relentless persecution in the park has put Botswana in negative light globally with Survival International, the global movement for tribal peoples’ rights, calling for a campaign to boycott tourism in the diamond rich country.

And over 8,000 people have pledged not to visit Botswana until the indige-nous people of the Kalahari are allowed to live freely on their land, and several tour companies have joined the boycott — bad news for Botswana, which earns about \$100 million a year from tourism.

“Tribal peoples are portrayed as backward and primitive simply because their communal ways are different. It’s a way of justifying the theft of their land and resources in the name of ‘progress’ and ‘civilisation’...” Survival’s Director Stephen Cory said in a statement.

Like the San, in southeast Cameroon, the Baka people are fighting for their ancestral land which is either being turned into national parks or awarded to Safari Hunting Companies.

“The Baka are theoretically allowed to enter areas of the parks, but in reality wildlife officers ignore this,” Survival International says in its report.

Dr Michael Painter, Director of Conservation and Quality of Human life Programme at the Wildlife Conservation Society, sums up the importance of integrating communities when he says that recognition of their rights and existence is essential in wildlife conservation.

“Prohibiting them from hunting and trying to treat them as if they were poachers is not an appropriate way to proceed...the result of all that is very often that the parks cannot be sustainable,” says Dr Painter.

Children celebrate World Parks Congress



On November 16, IUCN World Parks Congress organised a fun packed event at the Olympic Park, to engage and promote the conservation of parks and wildlife in protected areas. The festival gave space to delegates to connect and network.

“The PlanetFest gave us a chance to connect, interact and celebrate the importance of our parks,” said Brighton Kumchedwa, who works with Malawi’s department of National Parks and Wildlife. The festival was spiced up with activities for the young and old to engage and inspire through education and interaction. Sports and green workshops, traditional aboriginal artisans at work, interactive games for children, innovative environmental business, nature and wildlife conservation stalls, arts and crafts displaying some of Sydney’s finest artisans, formed part of the activities on the day.

There was also a live concert performance showcasing some of the best Australian talent, followed by the screening of an environmental film, narrated by Cate Blanchett.

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World Leaders Discuss Food Insecurity



Credit: Vusumuzi Sifile/IPS

Mozambican Minister of Environment, Alcinda António de Abreu (Right), makes a point during the World Leaders Dialogue session at the World Parks Congress on how the world can reduce poverty and eradicate hunger.

Making her contribution, the Mozambican Minister said there was a number of socio-

cultural factors that influence food production and utilization in Mozambique and other African countries. She singled out cultural practices and beliefs as one of the factors that perpetuates food insecurity in many households. She emphasised the need for an integrated approach to address food insecurity. Ms Abreu also said decentralization of governance structures would help focus more on the local level to improve food security.

Australia Commits \$2 mln To Save Threatened Species

By *Terraviva Reporter*

Australia has committed an extra \$2 million to boost the recovery of threatened Norfolk Island green parrot, Cocos buff-banded rail, long-nosed potoroo, southern brown bandicoot, northern quoll, partridge pigeon, brush-tailed rabbit-rat, and the plants of the Arnhem Plateau sandstone shrubland complex.

Speaking at the World Parks Congress in Sydney, Federal Environment Minister Greg Hunt and Threatened Species Commissioner Gregory Andrews said the funding meant 10 innovative projects targeting key species, habitat and threats across the Parks Australia network now had the go-ahead.

The \$2 million includes \$750,000 announced recently to support four Kakadu projects as part of the Kakadu Threatened Species Strategy.

"Our international visitors here will tell you that when they think of Australia, they think of our amazing animals, plants

and parks. But, as locals, we can sometimes take the sights and sounds of the bush and its wildlife for granted," Mr Hunt said.

"With this funding, we're issuing a wake-up call. If we want to preserve our native flora and fauna, then we need to do more work on the ground to tackle threats to their survival."

"I don't want my children to find the northern quoll, the partridge pigeon or the long nosed potoroo only in history books."

Threatened Species Commissioner Gregory Andrews said he was delighted to have this funding for such important work.

"Australia's national parks and reserves provide important habitat for our plants and animals and this funding boost will build on the good work occurring there to better address the threats that are putting many of our species at risk," Mr Andrews said.

The 10 projects span almost the entire Commonwealth parks estate (Kakadu, Booderee, Christmas Island, Norfolk Island and Pulu Keeling national parks) and the Australian National Botanic Gardens.

"We're safeguarding existing populations through strategies such as the seed banking of plants and the captive management, training, reintroduction or translocation of birds and animals," Mr Andrews said.

"At the same time, we're tackling head-on the multiple threats to their survival in the wild. Fires that are too hot and too frequent, for example, leave threatened species more exposed to feral cats and weeds."

"Each of the projects announced today addresses a different challenge and will need local input from communities, traditional owners, researchers and park staff. But the end game for all is the same - the recovery of at-risk species."

Delightfully Green, Blue Mountains



Braving through the pouring Sydney morning rain, other delegates attending the World Parks Congress 2014 in Sydney Australia, and I, hopped onto a bus headed towards the famous Blue Mountains Heritage Area.

The hour and half drive to the Kedumba Valley where the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWA) is located had all of the people on the bus eagerly looking out of the window so as to catch the first glimpse of the Blue Coloured Mountains. Unfortunately none of us could spot the mountains from the highway. The meandering drive led us to Wentworth Falls where we were welcomed by the Dharawal and Gurungurra tribal representatives. They took us through the 'welcome to country rituals'. Fascinated by the welcome smoking ceremony where we all had to walk through some cleansing smoke from a burning log, we quickly noticed that although the mountains in our background presented a superlative view they were nowhere near being blue.

Nonetheless the temperate eucalypt-dominated forest and woodlands of



A tribal aboriginal clan member takes the guests through a welcome 'smoking' ceremony at the entry point of the Wentworth Waterfalls in the Blue Mountains Area.

Credit: Marshall Patsanza

the mountains presented a delightful setting for the Wentworth waterfall. "Why are the mountains named Blue Mountains," a seemingly puzzled but yet inquisitive delegate asked.

The explanation for the mountains not radiating their blue colour that morning was blamed on the overcast conditions that were preventing the sunrays from bouncing off the evaporated eucalypt oils that cause the





perception of the blue coloring on the rock surfaces of the mountains.

As we hiked up the mountain trails one could not hesitate to marvel at the predominant natural vegetation of the higher ridges of eucalyptus forest as well as the heath-like vegetation, which is present on plateau edges above cliffs.

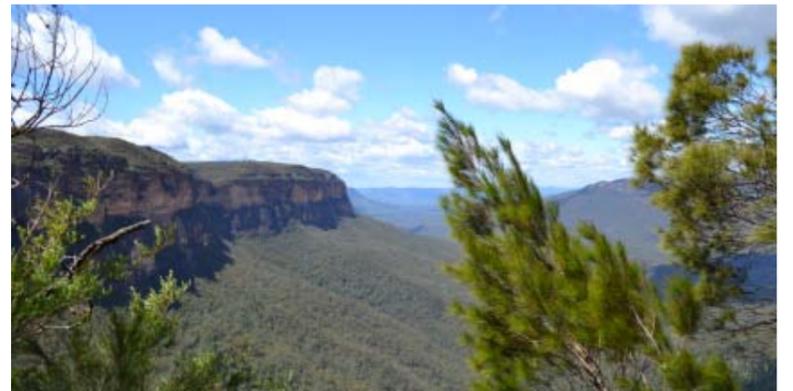
Clicks from the camera shutter buttons were accompanied by regular sighs of marvel as the delegates took pictures of the many hanging swamps with button grass reeds scattered around the hiking trail.

The GBMWAH consists of sandstone plateaux, escarpments and gorges dominated by temperate eucalypt forest. The wide range of habitats includes wet and dry sclerophyll forest, mallee heathlands, localised swamps, wetlands and grassland. The site is noted for its representation of the evolutionary adaptation and diversification of the eucalypts in post-Gondwana isolation on the Australian continent. Approximately 100 eucalypt taxa (thirteen percent of the global total) occur within the GBMWAH.

The site represents a significant amount of Australia's biodiversity with ten percent of the vascular flora as well as significant numbers of rare or threatened species, including endemic and evolutionary relict species, such as the Wollemi pine. Covering such a large area, the GBMWAH provides outstanding opportunities for conservation.

Approximately 100 species of eucalypts occur in the Greater Blue Mountains Area, from wet and dry sclerophyll, mallee heathlands, localised swamps, wetlands and grassland. Water collected in the Blue Mountains and Warragamba catchments supports nearly four million people and a complex ecosystem of plant and animal life.

The Greater Blue Mountains Area was unanimously listed as a World Heritage Area by UNESCO in the year 2000, becoming the fourth area in New South Wales to be listed. This excursion was one of the planned New South Wales National Parks tours organized by IUCN at the World Parks Congress so as to expose the various delegates from around the world Australia's conservation efforts.



Credit: Marshall Patsanza

